

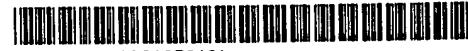
UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
 UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231
 www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING DATE	GRP ART UNIT	FIL FEE REC'D	ATTY.DOCKET.NO	DRAWINGS	TOT CLAIMS	IND CLAIMS
09/762,410 ✓	05/17/2001 ✓	3627	990 ✓	MRKS/0027	1 ✓	17 ✓	3

CONFIRMATION NO. 3881

FILING RECEIPT



OC000000006165619

William B Patterson
 Thomason Moser & Patterson
 3040 Post Oak Boulevard Suite 1500
 Houston, TX 77056

Date Mailed: 06/08/2001

Receipt is acknowledged of this nonprovisional Patent Application. It will be considered in its order and you will be notified as to the results of the examination. Be sure to provide the U.S. APPLICATION NUMBER, FILING DATE, NAME OF APPLICANT, and TITLE OF INVENTION when inquiring about this application. Fees transmitted by check or draft are subject to collection. Please verify the accuracy of the data presented on this receipt. If an error is noted on this Filing Receipt, please write to the Office of Initial Patent Examination's Customer Service Center. Please provide a copy of this Filing Receipt with the changes noted thereon. If you received a "Notice to File Missing Parts" for this application, please submit any corrections to this Filing Receipt with your reply to the Notice. When the USPTO processes the reply to the Notice, the USPTO will generate another Filing Receipt incorporating the requested corrections (if appropriate).

Applicant(s)

Paul David Metcalfe, Scotland, GBN; ✓

Domestic Priority data as claimed by applicant

THIS APPLICATION IS A 371 OF PCT/GB99/02605 08/09/1999

Foreign Applications

UNITED KINGDOM 9817246.3 08/08/1998

Projected Publication Date: N/A

Non-Publication Request: No

Early Publication Request: No

Title

Connector for expandable well screen ✓

Preliminary Class

285

Data entry by : NGUYEN, SON

Team : OIPE

Date: 06/08/2001



PCT

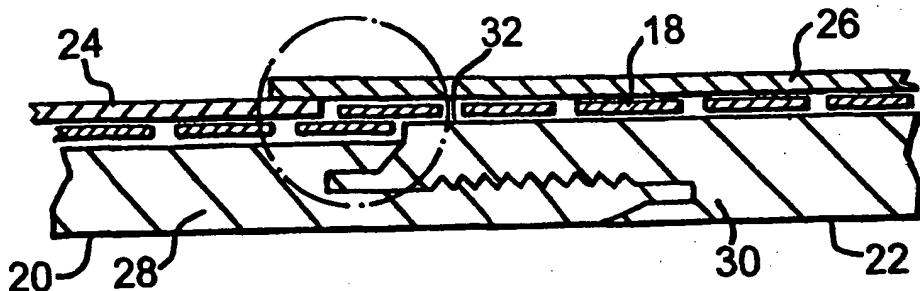
WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
International Bureau



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 7 : E21B 43/08, 43/10	A2	(11) International Publication Number: WO 00/08301 (43) International Publication Date: 17 February 2000 (17.02.00)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB99/02605		(81) Designated States: AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SL, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CR, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
(22) International Filing Date: 9 August 1999 (09.08.99)		
(30) Priority Data: 9817246.3 8 August 1998 (08.08.98) GB		
(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): PETROLINE WELLSYSTEMS LIMITED [GB/GB]; Offshore Technology Park, Claymore Drive, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen AB23 8GD (GB).		
(72) Inventor; and		Published
(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): METCALFE, Paul, David [GB/GB]; North Wing, Bucklerburn Steading, Peterculter AB14 0NP (GB).		Without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report.
(74) Agents: MCCALLUM, William, Potter et al.; Cruikshank & Fairweather, 19 Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow G1 3AE (GB).		

(54) Title: CONNECTOR FOR EXPANDABLE WELL SCREEN



(57) Abstract

A tubing connection arrangement (10) comprises two expandable tubing sections (12, 14), each tubing section comprising a filter screen (16, 18) sandwiched between inner expandable tubing (20, 22) and outer expandable tubing (24, 26). The filter screen of one tubing section overlaps the filter screen of the other tubing section and the outer expandable tubing of at least one of the tubing sections extends over the overlapping filter screens. On expansion of the tubing sections, the overlapping filter screens, restrained by the outer tubing, ensure the integrity of the filter between the tubing sections.

CONNECTOR FOR EXPANDABLE WELL SCREEN

This invention relates to a downhole connector, and in particular to an arrangement for ensuring the integrity of a sand screen or other filter medium at a connection between two lengths of expandable tubing utilised to support or form a sand screen or filter.

In many well bores where a liquid, for example oil, passes from a surrounding formation into the well bore, the liquid will often carry entrained sand particles. If this sand is permitted to pass into the well bore a number of problems may arise, including an increased likelihood of the well bore becoming blocked or restricted, and the sand may cause downhole tools to stick or jam, or wear prematurely. Accordingly, it is preferred that the sand particles are retained in the formation. This is achieved by providing screens or a filter around the casing or production tubing.

International Patent Application WO 97/17524 (Shell), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference, describes a radially expandable assembly in which overlapping filter sheets are sandwiched between inner expandable support tubing and outer expandable protective tubing, the expandable tubing featuring large numbers of overlapping longitudinal slots. When an expander cone is forced through the assembly, the inner and outer tubing is expanded radially, the slots extending to form diamond-shaped openings. The initial degree of overlap between the screens is selected such that,

tubing of the other tubing section.

Each filter screen will typically comprise a plurality of overlapping plates, sheets or membranes individually mounted to the respective inner expandable tubing by axially 5 parallel connectors or fixings, such as screws, lugs or welds.

Preferably, the filter screens of each tubing section are initially radially spaced apart to facilitate make-up of the connector. However, on expansion, the resistance of the outer tubing to radial expansion of the inner tubing ensures 10 that the outer filter screen is pressed into sand-tight engagement with the inner filter screen. The desired relative positioning of the filter screens of the two tubing sections may be achieved by providing one inner tubing section having an end of slightly larger diameter than the other. In certain embodiments the ends of each tubing section may be upset, that is of greater diameter than the remainder of the tubing section, and the desired difference 15 in diameter may be achieved by providing a slightly higher upset on one tubing section. Conveniently, the inner tubing sections will feature pin and box connections, and the upset on the box may be slightly higher than the pin. Of course the opposite arrangement may be provided, that is the pin upset 20 being higher than the box.

25 The ends of one or both filter screens may be provided with means for preventing interference between the screen ends when the tubing sections are rotated relative to one another, as may be the case if the tubing sections are

friction coating applied to the filter sheets, such as a PTFE-based material such as Teflon (trade mark). In other embodiments a friction-reducing lubricant, such as high temperature grease, may be provided. Alternatively, sheets of low friction material may be placed between the filter sheets and the tubing.

These and other aspects of the present invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

10 Figure 1 is a schematic sectional view of part of a connector in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, with the connector parts shown separated; and

15 Figure 2 is a schematic sectional view of the connector of Figure 1, with the connector parts shown coupled together.

The drawings illustrate part of a connector 10 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The connector 10 is provided between the ends of two sections of expandable tubing 12, 14, each comprising filter plates 16, 18 sandwiched between inner expandable support tubing 20, 22 and outer expandable protective tubing 24, 26. Each section of expandable tubing 20, 22, 24, 26 defines a large number of longitudinal overlapping slots. The sections of inner or base expandable tubing 20, 22 are formed with co-operating pin and box connections 28, 30, to allow the tubing sections 12, 14 to be made up by relative rotation.

As is more clearly apparent from Figure 2, the box connection 30 is upset from the pin 28. The filter plates 18

20, 22, 24, 26, and minimises the risk of tearing of the filter plates 16, 18 as the tubing sections are made up and expanded.

It will be clear to those of skill in the art that the above-described embodiment is merely exemplary of the present invention, and that various modifications and improvements may be made thereto without departing from the scope of the present invention.

section such that the filter screens are initially radially spaced apart.

6. The arrangement of claim 5, wherein the inner tubing of said one tubing section has an end of larger diameter than the 5 end of the inner tubing of the other tubing section.

7. The arrangement of claim 6, wherein the ends of at least one tubing section is upset.

8. The arrangement of claim 7, wherein the ends of both tubing sections are upset, with a higher upset being provided 10 on one tubing section.

9. The arrangement of claim 7 or 8, wherein the inner tubing sections incorporate pin and box connections, and the upset on the box is higher than the upset on the pin.

10. The arrangement of any of the preceding claims, wherein 15 the end of at least one filter screen is provided with means for preventing interference between the screen ends when the tubing sections are rotated relative to one another.

11. The arrangement of claim 10, wherein said means for preventing interference is a sleeve of extendible material.

20 12. The arrangement of claim 11, wherein the sleeve extends internally of at least one of the filter screens.

the filter sheets and the tubing.

17. The tubing of claim 16, wherein the friction reducing means is a low friction coating applied to the filter sheets.

1/1

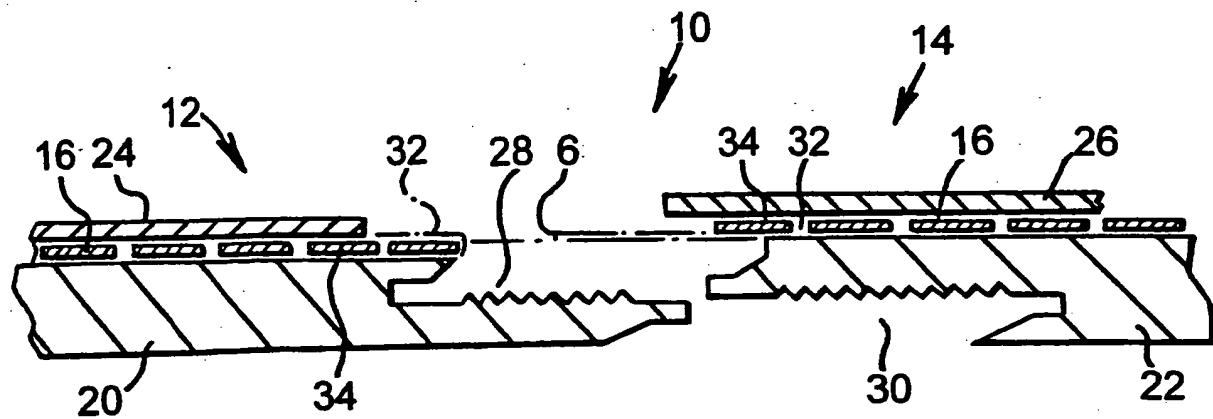


Fig. 1

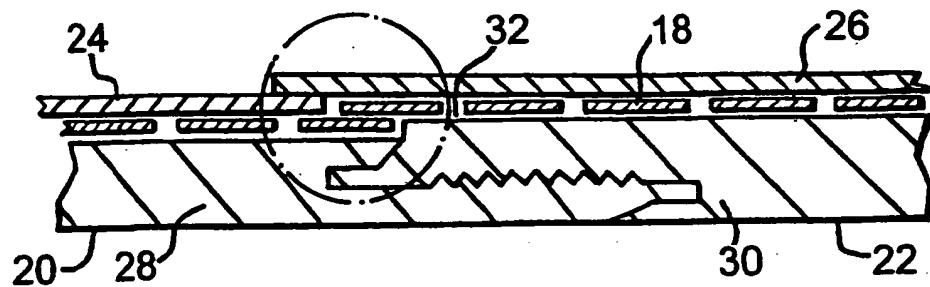


Fig. 2

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

Applicant's or agent's file reference AS/AM/P09326PC	FOR FURTHER ACTION see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.	
International application No. PCT/GB 99/02605	International filing date (day/month/year) 09/08/1999	(Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year) 08/08/1998
Applicant PETROLINE WELLSYSTEMS LIMITED et al.		

This International Search Report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This International Search Report consists of a total of 4 sheets.

It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

1. Basis of the report

a. With regard to the language, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).

b. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

contained in the international application in written form.

filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.

the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

2. Certain claims were found unsearchable (See Box I).

3. Unity of invention is lacking (see Box II).

4. With regard to the title,

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

CONNECTOR FOR EXPANDABLE WELL SCREEN

5. With regard to the abstract,

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

6. The figure of the drawings to be published with the abstract is Figure No.

as suggested by the applicant.

because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.

because this figure better characterizes the invention.

2

None of the figures.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/GB 99/02605

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.: because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claims Nos.: because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:

3. Claims Nos.: because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.

2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.

3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

1-15

Remark on Protest

The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.

No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

1. Claims: 1-15

Connection between expandable sand screen sections

2. Claims: 16, 17

Expandable sand screen section with reduced friction between
filter layers

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/GB 99/02605

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 7 E21B43/08 E21B43/10

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 E21B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO 97 17524 A (SHELL CANADA LTD ;SHELL INT RESEARCH (NL)) 15 May 1997 (1997-05-15) cited in the application page 9, line 23 - line 26; figures 1,2 ---	1,15
A	EP 0 659 975 A (NAGAOKA KK) 28 June 1995 (1995-06-28) column 7, line 36 - line 58; figure 8 ---	1,15
A	US 4 754 807 A (LANGE UDO) 5 July 1988 (1988-07-05) claim 1; figure 1 ---	1,15
A	WO 98 22690 A (SHELL CANADA LTD ;SHELL INT RESEARCH (NL)) 28 May 1998 (1998-05-28) figures 1,2 -----	1,15

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

Date of mailing of the international search report

4 November 1999

03.03.00

Name and mailing address of the ISA
 European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
 Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
 Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Bellingacci, F

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/GB 99/02605

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
WO 9717524 A	15-05-1997	AU	710745 B	30-09-1999
		AU	7568096 A	29-05-1997
		BR	9611456 A	17-02-1999
		EP	0859902 A	26-08-1998
		JP	11514712 T	14-12-1999
		NO	982087 A	07-07-1998
		NZ	322015 A	28-10-1999
		US	6012522 A	11-01-2000
		US	5901789 A	11-05-1999
<hr/>				
EP 0659975 A	28-06-1995	JP	7158124 A	20-06-1995
		AU	7906994 A	08-06-1995
		BR	9404805 A	08-08-1995
		CN	1109548 A	04-10-1995
		US	5787980 A	04-08-1998
<hr/>				
US 4754807 A	05-07-1988	DE	3614537 A	12-11-1987
<hr/>				
WO 9822690 A	28-05-1998	AU	714026 B	16-12-1999
		AU	5656598 A	10-06-1998
		EP	0939854 A	08-09-1999
		NO	992359 A	14-05-1999
<hr/>				

51041

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF THE RECORDING
OF A CHANGE(PCT Rule 92bis.1 and
Administrative Instructions, Section 422)Date of mailing (day/month/year)
26 July 2000 (26.07.00)

To:

HARDING, Richard, Patrick
Marks & Clerk
4220 Nash Court
Oxford Business Park South
Oxford
OX4 2RU
ROYAUME-UNIApplicant's or agent's file reference
AS/AM/P09326PC

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION

International application No.
PCT/GB99/02605International filing date (day/month/year)
09 August 1999 (09.08.99)

1. The following indications appeared on record concerning:

the applicant the inventor the agent the common representative

Name and Address

PETROLINE WELLSYSTEMS LIMITED
Offshore Technology Park
Claymore Drive
Bridge of Don
Aberdeen AB23 8GD
United Kingdom

State of Nationality

GB

State of Residence

GB

Telephone No.

Facsimile No.

Teleprinter No.

2. The International Bureau hereby notifies the applicant that the following change has been recorded concerning:

the person the name the address the nationality the residence

Name and Address

WEATHERFORD/LAMB, INC.
515 Post Oak Boulevard
Suite 600
Houston, TX 77027
United States of America

State of Nationality

US

State of Residence

US

Telephone No.

Facsimile No.

Teleprinter No.

3. Further observations, if necessary:

4. A copy of this notification has been sent to:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the receiving Office	<input type="checkbox"/> the designated Offices concerned
<input type="checkbox"/> the International Searching Authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the elected Offices concerned
<input type="checkbox"/> the International Preliminary Examining Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

The International Bureau of WIPO
34, chemin des Colombettes
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

Authorized officer

A. Karkachi

Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35

Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38



PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

AS

the
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

To:

McCALLUM, William Potter et al.
CRUIKSHANK & FAIRWEATHER
19 Royal Exchange Square
Glasgow G1 3AE
GRANDE BRETAGNE

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF
THE INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT
(PCT Rule 71.1)

Date of mailing
(day/month/year) 11.05.2000

Applicant's or agent's file reference
AS/SC/PO9326PC

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION

International application No.
PCT/GB99/02605

International filing date (day/month/year)
09/08/1999

Priority date (day/month/year)
08/08/1998

Applicant
PETROLINE WELLSYSTEMS LIMITED et al.

1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary examination report and its annexes, if any, established on the international application.
2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.
3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translation to those Offices.

4. REMINDER

The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices) (Article 39(1)) (see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB/301).

Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary examination report. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide.

Name and mailing address of the IPEA/

European Patent Office
D-80298 Munich
Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d
Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465

Authorized officer

Emer, W

Tel. +49 89 2399-2972



PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference AS/SC/PO9326PC	FOR FURTHER ACTION	See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)
International application No. PCT/GB99/02605	International filing date (day/month/year) 09/08/1999	Priority date (day/month/year) 08/08/1998
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC E21B43/08		
Applicant PETROLINE WELLSYSTEMS LIMITED et al.		
<p>1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of 7 sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).</p> <p>These annexes consist of a total of sheets.</p>		
<p>3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basis of the report II <input type="checkbox"/> Priority III <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability IV <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of unity of invention V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement VI <input type="checkbox"/> Certain documents cited VII <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certain defects in the international application VIII <input type="checkbox"/> Certain observations on the international application 		
Date of submission of the demand 07/03/2000	Date of completion of this report 11.05.2000	
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized officer Bellingacci, F Telephone No. +49 89 2399 2784	



INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/GB99/02605

I. Basis of the report

1. This report has been drawn on the basis of (substitute sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to the report since they do not contain amendments.):

Description, pages:

1-7 as originally filed

Claims, No.:

1-17 as originally filed

Drawings, sheets:

1/1 as originally filed

2. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

the description, pages:
 the claims, Nos.:
 the drawings, sheets:

3. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

4. Additional observations, if necessary:

III. Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability

The questions whether the claimed invention appears to be novel, to involve an inventive step (to be non-obvious), or to be industrially applicable have not been examined in respect of:

the entire international application.
 claims Nos. 16, 17.

because:

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/GB99/02605

- the said international application, or the said claims Nos. relate to the following subject matter which does not require an international preliminary examination (*specify*):

- the description, claims or drawings (*indicate particular elements below*) or said claims Nos. are so unclear that no meaningful opinion could be formed (*specify*):

- the claims, or said claims Nos. are so inadequately supported by the description that no meaningful opinion could be formed.
- no international search report has been established for the said claims Nos. 16, 17.

IV. Lack of unity of invention

1. In response to the invitation to restrict or pay additional fees the applicant has:
 - restricted the claims.
 - paid additional fees.
 - paid additional fees under protest.
 - neither restricted nor paid additional fees.
2. This Authority found that the requirement of unity of invention is not complied and chose, according to Rule 68.1, not to invite the applicant to restrict or pay additional fees.
3. This Authority considers that the requirement of unity of invention in accordance with Rules 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3 is
 - complied with.
 - not complied with for the following reasons:

see separate sheet
4. Consequently, the following parts of the international application were the subject of international preliminary examination in establishing this report:
 - all parts.
 - the parts relating to claims Nos. 1-15.

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/GB99/02605

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes: Claims 1-15
	No: Claims
Inventive step (IS)	Yes: Claims 1-15
	No: Claims
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes: Claims 1-15
	No: Claims

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

VII. Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

see separate sheet

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/GB99/02605

Reference is made to the following document:

D1 = WO 97 17524 A

III - Non-establishment of opinion

III-1 Claims 16 and 17 cannot be examined as no search report has been drawn for them.

IV - Lack of unity of invention

The present application comprises the following (groups of) inventions:

- Claims 1-15: connection between expandable sand screen sections
- Claims 16, 17: expandable sand screen section with reduced friction between filter layers

Claims 1 to 15 relate to the connection between lengths of sand screens comprising a filter screen sandwiched between an inner expandable tubing and an outer expandable tubing. The "special technical feature" (in the meaning of Rule 13.2 PCT) of said claims is, that both the filter screen and the outer tubing of adjacent lengths overlap when the sections are connected together.

The problem solved by said special technical features is to achieve a "sand tight" connection between adjacent lengths of filter screens (description, page 2, lines 4 to 10).

Claims 16 and 17 relate to a single length of sand screen comprising a plurality of filter screens sandwiched between an inner expandable tubing and an outer expandable tubing. The "special technical feature" of said claims can be identified in the presence of means for reducing the friction between the filter screens when they are expanded.

The problem solved by said feature is to facilitate relative movement of the filter screens during expansion (description, page 4, lines 22-27) and decrease therefore the likelihood of damages occurring during the expansion of the screen.

The feature which is common to the two groups of inventions, that a sand screen comprises a filter screen sandwiched between an inner expandable tubing and an outer expandable tubing, is known in the art (see WO,A,97/17524, fig. 1 and 2),

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/GB99/02605

and therefore cannot be seen as the "special technical feature" of the two inventions.

The "special technical features" of the two groups of inventions solve therefore unrelated problems by means of unrelated features, whereby there is no single general inventive concept linking the inventions of the two groups.

V - Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2 (a)(ii)

V-1 D1, which is considered as the closest prior art, describes a tubing section comprising a filter screen sandwiched between an inner expandable tubing and an outer expandable tubing.

The subject-matter of claim 1 is new insomuch it relates to a tubing connection arrangement for two expandable sections as in D1, the filter screen of one tubing section overlapping the filter screen of the other tubing section and the outer expandable tubing of at least one of the tubing sections extending over the overlapping filter screens.

The subject-matter of claim 1 is therefore new and the claim meets the novelty requirement of Art. 33(2) PCT.

V-2 D1 does not disclose how the sections of expandable tubing are connected one to the other. The other cited documents do refer to the connection between sections of expandable tubing comprising also a filter element, but none of said documents suggest to arrange the filter element of one section so that it overlaps the filter element of the adjoining section. By this solution however a sand-tight connection is achieved also in correspondence of the joint.

Claim 1 meets therefore the inventive step requirement of Art. 33(3) PCT.

V-3 Claims 2 to 14 meet the requirements of Art. 33(2) and (3) PCT as they are formulated as depending from a claim which does meet said requirements. Method claim 15 meets also said requirements as it specifies, in method terms, the same inventive concept specified in apparatus terms in claim 1.

V-4 The devices and methods of claims 1 to 15 find industrial application in the completion of oil wells.

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/GB99/02605

VII - Certain defects

VII-1 The features of the claims are not provided with reference signs placed in parentheses (Rule 6.2(b) PCT).

VII-2 The statement in the description at page 7, last paragraph, does not meet the requirements of Art. 6 PCT as interpreted in the PCT Guidelines, PCT/GL/3 III, 4.3a.